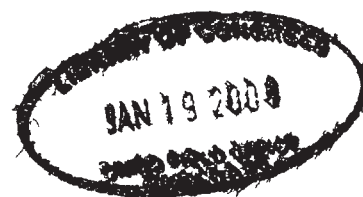


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**Ramadhan is the month in which
was sent down the Qur'an, as a
guide to mankind, also clear signs
for guidance and judgement
between right and wrong.**

Report

IIRO Mitigating Human Suffering

MWL aid agency always in the forefront of humanitarian causes

WITH the objective of mitigating human suffering starvation and disease, the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) an ancillary humanitarian agency of the Muslim World League Makkah al-Mukarramah has spearheaded several humanitarian programmes for the needy and deserving people throughout the world

The IIRO has also focussed on improving the lot of Muslim communities and provided them with health care services created more employment opportunities and set up educational and vocational training centres and institutes wherever feasible, within its available resources

The magnitude of the problem, according to an IIRO report is reflected by the fact that over 800 million men women and children in many parts of the world suffered every year from malnutrition starvation and various kinds of diseases

Millions of children die every

year due to lack of vaccination facilities against epidemics and precautionary measures Poor health and deteriorated hygienic conditions further affected adversely their poverty-stricken conditions in many parts of the world

As a latest move of its humanitarian service IIRO joined its efforts with the Saudi Arabian Joint Committee for the Relief of Kosova people spearheaded by the Saudi Red Crescent Society (SRCS) to help Kosovars who were uprooted from their homes in that predominantly Muslim province by Serbian forces

In this regard the IIRO Secretary General Dr Adnan Khalil Pasha made an appeal to citizens and residents in Saudi Arabia to extend assistance in cash and kind to the people of Kosovos who were passing through critical circumstances and were in need of assistance from all parties He had pointed out The return of the refugees of Kosova does not necessarily mean that their ordeal is

over and their sufferings have come to an end'

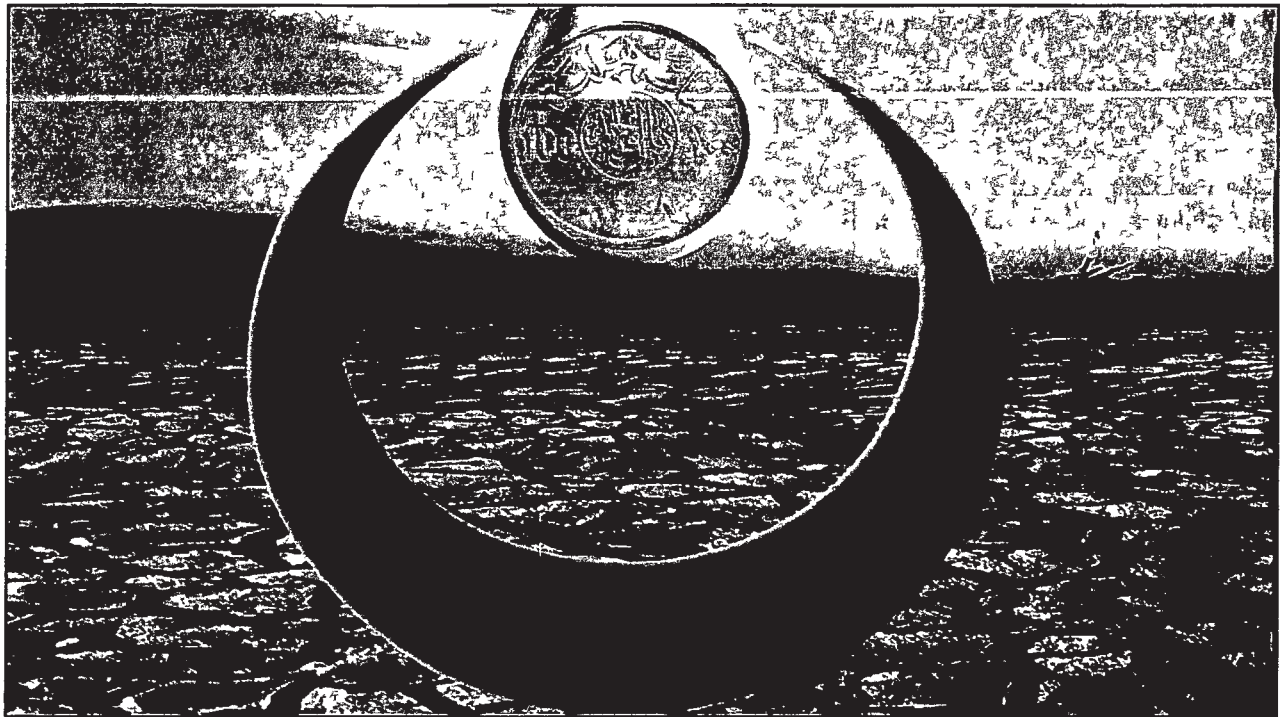
Citing the humanitarian work done by his Organization in Kosova Dr Pasha said that the IIRO among other relief schemes arranged to dig wells to provide drinking water for Kosovar refugees at Pirat refugee camp In the framework of the Saudi Joint Relief Committee, it launched intensive media campaign to highlight the Kosova crisis and distributed 2,000 video cassettes 10,000 cassettes and 160 000 printed posters to accomplish this objective

The IIRO has also sent relief planes carrying foodstuff medicines, milk blankets and medical appliances for Tirana from time to time for Kosovar refugees

Among the achievements of the IIRO in the various parts of the world is the setting up of several mosques, educational centres and institutes for the teaching of the Holy Qur'an and Arabic language

Under the annual *Sanabil Al Khair* programme, the IIRO relief

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The International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) is the premier Muslim aid agency striving to mitigate human suffering worldwide

operations consisted of service to refugees orphans and the poor around the world. It carried on various fund-raising events in the months of Ramadhan and Hajj to motivate businessmen and philanthropists to donate their charities in the service of the Muslim poor and deserving people in the various parts of the world.

In an event held in the last week of December 1998, under the patronage of Riyadh Governor Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz, IIRO had collected SR six million for its various projects.

Makkah Governor Prince Majed bin Abdul Aziz's continuous support to IIRO activities in order to fulfil its objectives were appreciated by IIRO Secretary General. He said IIRO is considered one of the Kingdom's major contributions to the world and it is a major chan-

nel for the people to extend humanitarian assistance to their fellow Muslims in different parts of the world especially the victims of war, drought, hunger and natural calamities.

The IIRO played a leading role in providing Iftar meals, dates and other commodities during the month of Ramadhan to hundreds of thousands of Muslims scattered in many parts of the world.

A report said that during the year 1997-98, 628,750 Muslims benefitted in 35 countries of the African continent from Iftar food sufficiently supplied by IIRO at the cost of SR 113 million. Over 680,170 people benefitted from this relief operation in 21 countries in the Asian continent with a budget of SR 14 million, while in European continent's nine states over 87,000 fasting Muslims received

this relief from IIRO.

The budget on this project was estimated at SR 430,000. There were about 20,000 beneficiaries of the relief in six states of the Americas at the cost of SR 100,000. The IIRO extended health services for the amelioration of the acute circumstances, which hit poor communities in the various parts as a result of the spread of malaria and tuberculosis (TB), in addition to malnutrition which children were suffering from, plus the paucity of health-care for mothers.

It operated several hospitals and medical centres and implemented primary health care programmes and vaccination campaigns and offered other support to humanitarian organizations. It runs the Uhud Hospital in Quetta, Pakistan, which benefits a million patients every year.

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It operates the Khost Hospital at an annual budget of SR 105,580 and Shamshtoo Clinic at an annual budget of SR 25 000 in Afghanistan. In Peshawar, it is running the Badr Hospital for women and children and in Jalalabad, it has set up the Sayyidah Fatima Hospital also for women and children, in cooperation with UNESCO.

The IIRO is running two hospitals in Kashmir, one in Sopore which is visited by about 60,000 patients every year, and the other one in Srinagar which is visited by about 50,000 patients annually.

In Lucknow, India, the IIRO runs the Al-Hayat Hospital which is visited by about 200,000 patients annually.

The Kibuli Hospital in Uganda is also extending medical services to the people of the area and is visited by about 50 000 patients every year, in addition to the Al Nur Hospital there.

The IIRO is also running several clinics and health centers in the Comoro Islands, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Senegal, the Arafat district of Mauritania and Gambia.

The IIRO also distributed large quantities of foodstuff to the victims of war in southern Sudan. The Organization has its regional office in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan. The total aid last year amounted to 222 tons of grains, 44.5 tons of lentils and 3 311 cans of cooking oil. This was made possible by the generous donations made by Saudi businessmen and philanthropists.

The IIRO completed the construction of a mosque in November 1998 in Morotu, the capital of the



Providing succour to the uprooted Bosnian Muslims. Taking care of the Muslim orphans in the various ways is an important scheme of the IIRO.

Karnuja region in Uganda. There are about 7 000 Muslims in Morotu, which is 350 kms from Kampala, the Ugandan capital, and they needed a mosque there for prayers.

In its diversified relief operations, the IIRO continued its efforts to rescue people affected by floods which hit Bangladesh in November 1998. It distributed relief aid, including 10 000 bags full of foodstuff at a total cost of SR 159 574. In addition, 1,000 houses were built for displaced persons and 500 wells were dug for drinking water. It also renovated 100 mosques in Bangladesh with the help of IIRO donations collected from the well-to-do donors and philanthropists.

On another social service front, the IIRO sponsored about 82 000 orphans worldwide and provided relief to various social centres for this purpose. The Organization's Riyadh Office alone is sponsoring 7 000 orphans at a cost of SR

22 184,718 annually.

The IIRO undertakes to provide comprehensive care for the orphans through health care as well as cultural, educational and vocational training programmes. Machines and tools are also provided to make them earn their livelihood in a decent manner.

The social centres make continuous efforts towards the proper upbringing and promoting good moral conduct of the orphans, so that they grow up as upright Muslims in order to be effective members of their societies. Among the centres financed and run by IIRO, there are 10 in Pakistan and Afghanistan which together take care of 1 684 orphans, while there are three more centers functioning in Bangladesh.

Report **Furqan Ahmad**
Riyadh Daily